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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the collaborative planning, implementation, and assessment processes that are shifting the educational focus in public schools and teacher education programs from how teachers teach to how children learn. It emphasizes the second year of a 3-year grant, in which a university and public school district are attempting to improve student achievement, provide faculty development, and field base pre-service teacher education through implementing the Northwest Texas for Professional Development and Technology Program. The collaborative's vision of early childhood and elementary education is based on educational practices that are developmentally appropriate, value cultural and linguistic diversity, and recognize the social nature of learning. This paper describes the planning, demographics, impact on student achievement, impact of pre-service education on students, and impact of professional development on students in one school district. Snapshots of interviews with faculty, classroom observations, influence on individual schools, and district impact are provided. Keys to this effort's success include valuing all participants from day one, consistently giving all participants voice and choice, teaming, having administrators who are willing to empower all faculty members, and focusing on public school students and learning. (Contains 23 references.) (SM)

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Focusing On the Pre-K to Grade Four Literacy Learner in Professional Development Schools

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Introduction

Shifting the educational focus from "how teachers teach" to "how children learn."

This article discusses the collaborative planning, implementation, and ongoing assessment processes that are shifting the educational focus in public schools and in teacher education programs from "how teachers teach" to "how children learn." Specifically, this article will describe the second year of a three-year grant in which a university and public school district are attempting to improve student achievement, provide faculty development, and field base preservice teacher education. The collaborative's vision of early childhood and elementary education is one that is based on educational practices that: 1) are developmentally appropriate, 2) value cultural and linguistic diversity, and 3) recognize the social nature of learning. Development, implementation, evaluation, and survival of this continually evolving field-based program requires constant communication, collaborative decision making, and altering collegial relationships.

It is important to share this program and successful processes with colleagues who are struggling to implement similar initiatives in their geographic area. This nationally award winning program, the Northeast Texas for Professional Development and Technology (NETCPDT) was fully implemented in the spring of 1996. There are currently over 400 elementary and secondary interns and residents enrolled in the year long field-based teacher education program and over 1,000 public school and university faculty participating in this program. Preservice teachers who complete this program have been extremely complimentary of the education they have received. They feel well prepared to enter the classroom, and the public schools, who help prepare these preservice teachers, are eager to employ them because they believe these new teachers perform more like second or third year teachers.

As the collaborative process of field basing teacher education continues, the phrase, "I've never done it that way before," slowly disappears. Perhaps this is because the collaborative reform is not built on the mindset " What is best for me?" but, rather, "What is best for the children?" This mindset appears

to create a synergistic effect that leads to an ongoing cycle of growth for all involved. The processes in which this newly formed professional community engages result in three fundamental shifts. First, public school students become the focus of the shared decision making process so learning is enhanced. Second, the focus, content, and delivery of preservice teacher education shifts so that learning about teaching is grounded in theory, practice, and the context of the public school. Third, faculty development shifts so that learning occurs by weighing rights and responsibilities while collaboratively making decisions. Most importantly, implementation of this program has resulted in improved reading and math achievement in primary schools targeted for academic improvement.

Theoretical Framework

Previous research focusing on teacher beliefs has concluded that most methods courses do little to effect changes in teachers' beliefs from their prior experience (Clark, Smith, Newby, & Cook, 1985). Student teaching, however, has long been recognized as possibly the most potent aspect of preservice teacher education (Britzman, 1991). Goodlad (1991) identified the use of clinical or "teaching" schools as one of the conditions for the redesign of teacher education. However, as noted by Goodlad:

> *We are not likely to have good schools without a continuing supply of excellent teachers. Nor are we likely to have excellent teachers unless they are immersed in exemplary schools for significant portions of their induction into teaching. [But] Herein lies a dilemma. What comes first, good schools or good teacher education programs?* (Goodlad, 1994; p. 1)

Field-based teacher education or professional development schools appear to be one of the major responses to the call for renewing teacher education and improving schools, but are they making a difference with the public school students?

Much current literature focuses on preservice teachers and university instructors (Author, 1994, 1995; Commeyras, Reinking, Heuback, & Pagnucco, 1993; Kanouse, Sampson, & Coker, 1995; Mosenthal, 1995; Robbins & Patterson, 1994; Roskos & Walker, 1993; Wilson, Konopak, & Readence, 1993) and the factors affecting teacher beliefs and practices (Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Ford, 1993; Hunsaker & Johnston, 1992; Sturtevant, 1993, 1996). A review of the current research focusing on field-

based teacher education and literacy yields mainly program descriptions (Anderson, Caswell, & Hayes, 1994; Roehler, Rushcamp, & Lamberts, 1991; Strode, 1996) and studies of preservice teachers (Lefever-Davis & Helfeldt, 1994).

Many of the studies reporting on school change that do not include field-based teacher education as a component (Scharer, Freeman, Lehman, & Allen, 1993; Shapiro, 1994; Williams, 1996). Those that do include field-based teacher education give a cursory view of their teacher preparation program and its benefits (Author, 1996; Horn & Ramsey, 1995). Since most of the current research and literature does not focus on what occurs with public school children when implementing these reforms, this article will attempt to fill that gap.

Specifically this article will present an overview of the: planning, demographics, impact on student achievement, impact of preservice education on students, and impact of professional development on students in one school district. Snapshots of interviews with faculty, classroom observations, influence on individuals schools, and district impact will be provided. Discussion on collaborating to impact kids will focus on the Northeast Texas Center for Professional Development and Technology (NETCPDT) and the pursuit of excellence in education with an Academics 2000 Grant. The specific partners in this grant are the Sulphur Springs Independent School District and Texas A & M University-Commerce.

Background

The NETCPDT is a collaboration of teachers and administrators from several Independent School Districts and Texas A & M University-Commerce. The goals of the NETCPDT are to:

- Collaborate to redesign preservice teacher education to provide a comprehensive field experience.
- Collaborate to design relevant field-based professional development for public school teachers and university faculty.
- Collaborate to better meet the diverse needs of Pre-K through grade 12 learners.

These goals were collaboratively developed and based upon an initiative to improve the quality of education in the area.

To create the new program, university and public school faculty and administrators met to develop a preservice teacher education program that would meet the needs of public school students and university students. The following vision was developed for a professional development center, "One that is designed, implemented, delivered, monitored, evaluated, and modified by a collaboration of partners with representation from all constituents of the program, i. e., teacher educators, university students, public school classroom teachers and administrators." As stated in the vision, the guiding principle was the concept of organic collaboration and shared decision making. This was a new concept for public school personnel, university faculty, and university students. Most importantly, the central focus of the collaborative was on meeting the needs of the children in the Pre-K through grade 12 public school classroom.

Views were shared and discussed among the partners concerning what knowledge and qualities a good teacher possessed and what experiences facilitated the acquiring of these traits. Initial implementation of the evolving program required constant communication, collaborative decision making, and altered collegial relationships. The processes in which this newly formed professional community engaged resulted in three fundamental shifts. First, the focus, content, and delivery of preservice teacher education shifted so that learning about teaching was grounded in theory, practice, and the context of the public school. Second, faculty development shifted so that learning occurred by weighing rights and responsibilities while collaboratively making decisions. Third, public school students became the focus of the shared decision making process so learning was enhanced.

Reform in Pre-K through Grade 12 Education

The plan for reform in public schools intertwined preservice teachers, mentors, and university faculties so that the learning of public school students became the center of attention. Thus, Pre-K through grade 12 students receive better instruction because mentor teachers serve as models for interns and residents. When interns observe mentors in order to learn about teaching, mentors note a shift in their own concern with emphasizing a student-centered focus and modeling best practice. In addition, the public school student is no longer just the responsibility of the classroom teacher.

Reform in Preservice Teacher Education

The plan for preservice reform intertwines theory, practice, and context in order to anchor learning for preservice teachers. Preservice teachers are exposed to a minimum amount of theory concerning learning and teaching prior to entering the field by only completing general studies, specialization area courses, and four pre-requisite courses on the university campus. The majority of their teacher preparation program is delivered and practiced in the context of the public school. Preservice teachers enter a two semester program comprised of an internship semester and a residency semester during their senior year.

During the first semester interns spend two days a week in the school and one day a week in integrated seminars. During the second semester residents spend five days a week in the school with seminars scheduled on a regular basis. Seminars consist of an integrated course of study conducted by university and public school faculty. Interns and residents are exposed to theories and strategies through seminar instruction, assigned professional readings, staff development opportunities, and structured observation in public school classrooms.

Mentors, university faculty, and preservice teachers believed that the first two weeks of the school year is a critical time for observing and establishing relationships. Immersing interns "from the first class day so that they could observe and participate in the process of students becoming familiar with management and instructional practices and procedures" was cited as crucial for beginning teachers to "appreciate how the students act in November" and "know what it took to get them to that point." Thus, it was mutually decided that interns would begin their internship with their Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) on the first day of in-service. Consequently, preservice teachers team with their mentor teachers as they prepare for the opening of school, experience setting the tone as students arrive on the first day of class, participate in establishing classroom practices and procedures, and experience the multiple roles and responsibilities required of teachers as they begin the school year with students.

Reform in Professional Development for Inservice Faculty

The plan for reform in professional development intertwines rights, responsibilities, and team decision making so that current faculty become learners too. The public school student is no longer just the responsibility of the classroom teacher. The responsibility for Pre-K through grade 12 student success also becomes the responsibility of the intern, resident, and university faculty. Likewise, the preservice teacher is no longer just the responsibility of the university faculty. Interns and residents are required to take responsibility for their own learning, mentor teachers provide expert modeling of practices/procedures, and university faculty serve as a reflective mirror and resource for all.

Results

The results section is split into three major parts. First a section dealing with improved achievement for Pre-K to grade four students will be presented. Second, results for the preservice education component will be shown. Finally, the results for professional development will be furnished.

Pre-K to Grade Four Students

The Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) scores document quantifiable achievement for the three special needs campuses that administer the test (the fourth campus is an early childhood campus that does not administer TAAS). Each of these three campuses achieved an "Exemplary" rating indicating that:

- On the spring 1996 TAAS at least 90% of all students and each student group passed the reading, writing, and mathematics TAAS.
- The 1994-95 attendance rate was at least 94%

Another logical way to document impact of the program is to look at the increase in a particular group's scores over the period of time that the NETCPDT and Academics 2000 Program have been in place. Therefore, the Texas Statewide Accountability Campus Performance Ratings (see Table 1) will be utilized to review a four year period for the three targeted campuses.

Table 1. TEXAS STATEWIDE ACCOUNTABILITY: CAMPUS PERFORMANCE RATINGS

EXEMPLARY

- 90% of all students taking the tests must pass all TAAS taken for all subjects across all grade levels
- 97% average daily attendance

RECOGNIZED

- 60% of all students taking the tests must pass all TAAS taken for all subjects across all grade levels
- 95% average daily attendance

ACCEPTABLE

- Campuses that do not qualify as exemplary or recognized but are above the status of low-performing

LOW-PERFORMING

- 20% or fewer of all students taking the TAAS passing all tests taken for all subjects across all grade levels

The four year period selected for review encompasses the year prior to implementation of the NETCPDT (1993/94), the first year field-based teacher education was implemented in the schools (1994/95), and the two years during which the Academics 2,000 grant has been implemented. Targeted campuses were selected because they initially had the lowest campus performance ratings and the highest percentages of students on free and reduced lunch (economically disadvantaged). As noted in Table 2, each of the three targeted campuses improved from Acceptable to Exemplary performance during the four year period under study.

Table 2. SULPHUR SPRINGS ISD TARGETED CAMPUS PERFORMANCE

	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97
Campus A				
Economically Disadvantaged	68.30%	65.40%	69.60%	61.04%
# Interns/Residents	0	4	6	7
# Classroom Teachers	10	10	8	8
TAAS Rating	Acceptable	Acceptable	Exemplary	Exemplary
Campus B				
Economically Disadvantaged	47.70%	52.50%	53.30%	47.06%
# Interns/Residents	0	4	4	5
# Classroom Teachers	12	11	11	8
TAAS Rating	Acceptable	Recognized	Acceptable	Exemplary
Campus C				
Economically Disadvantaged	40.6%	49.3%	47.2%	46.35%
# Interns/Residents		3	5	5
# Classroom Teachers	13	12	12	9
TAAS Rating	Acceptable	Recognized	Recognized	Exemplary

Preservice Education

Formal rating data were collected at the end of the intern and resident semesters. The following informal data were collected continuously: K-W-L needs assessment at the beginning of each seminar; Exit Slips; in-process assessment during seminars; and weekly liaison discussions of needs with interns, residents, mentors, and administrators. Weekly liaison planning meetings with seminar presenters were designed to share findings, concerns, and create an action plan for dealing with concerns and meeting the needs of the participants in the next seminar. Satisfactory performance was also documented through review of the First time test taker ExCET passing rates. NETCPDT student passing rates for Fall 1996 and Spring 1997 residents were:

Professional Development - Elementary	84%
Elementary Comprehensive	81%

The Professional Development passing rate was up 5% over last year.

Professional Development

Data were collected at the end of Training/Staff Development sessions for staff on an individual formative evaluation form for each participant. A Likert scale rating of 5 (highly effective) to 1 (not very effective) was used to rate each consultant on five criteria. An area for comments was also provided. Review of the data indicated that each session was perceived as "highly effective" to "effective" except for one session. This session was impacted by a last minute schedule change and started one hour late. Thus the evaluation may have been influenced more by the timing than by the content. Exceptionally positive comments on consultants or presentations that were attended outside the district were individually followed by a discussion with the district coordinator. This perception checking lead to the identification of consultants and presenters who were perceived as highly effective by staff members for invitation to conduct staff development sessions for the entire district. Staff members who attended Training/Staff Development sessions were encouraged to present similar Training/Staff Development sessions to their peers. As evidenced by the attendance data, proliferation of knowledge occurred through peer teaching.

Data collected during interviews across the district revealed that staff development sessions were consistently perceived as meeting needs as evidenced by the following quotes:

"Workshops are now geared to what we need."

"I'm now choosing workshops that fit my needs. I haven't been to one that is not good."

"[These sessions provided] powerful teaching tools for me. Although I've taught for 21 years, I still need to read and keep current. Without Academics 2,000, I probably would have still been in the same rut in the classroom."

"These sessions have helped me more than anything I've ever done."

Staff members communicated an increased awareness of themselves, their students, and the context in which they teach as evidenced by the following quotes:

"The levels of poverty sessions were an eye opener to me. [I realized] I was so middle class. [The sessions] helped me to realize how kids are acting and to understand parents."

"Wong made me realize things I needed to do, also a lot of ideas I had, he backed up."

"Now I look at each child. I used to just write plans to go with the book."

"I have a better relationship with parents now. I talk to them the way I would want to be talked to. I'm more lenient if it is a single parent working long hours."

"We have more dysfunctional families and many are working so hard just to make a living that they don't have time to sit down and do 30 minutes of homework. They are doing things [in the evening] that my mother [who didn't work outside the home] did all day while I was at school."

Observations of the same classrooms over a period of two years revealed an increase in: sensitivity toward students, meeting individual needs, problem solving, use of strategies, and a learning focus. For example, in one classroom an initial observation of a reading/language arts lesson revealed strict adherence to an assertive discipline plan and instruction that was test driven and teacher controlled. Instruction consisted of two prepared sentences on the chalkboard that contained grammatical errors and a list of vocabulary words. The teacher asked students to copy the sentences and words on their paper. After waiting for a few minutes, the teacher asked students to tell her what errors in verb tense were in the

sentences. The teacher listened and made the corrections at the chalkboard. Off-task students were reprimanded by being given check marks on the chalkboard. A later observation of the same teacher revealed more actively involved students. In this lesson the students had brought their own questions to the group that were shared and discussed. The teacher extended the discussion with mainly higher level questions and encouraged diverse answers. A sensitivity to students in this teacher's manner and interaction with the children was noted as the teacher moved around the group, asked questions, and gave encouragement when children were beginning to get off task. The lesson was completed with all students participating, no disruption to the flow of the lesson, and no student behavior that resulted in consequences. In a final observation, the same teacher integrated a variety of strategies, consciously built student efficacy, and consistently required students to explain their reasoning. Children were encouraged to share their mistakes to clarify what they had learned and how their understanding had changed. For example, one child had not understood how to use a decimal point when writing 4 one hundredths. Instead of 1.04, the child had written 1.4. This child raised her hand to share that she had misunderstood and made a mistake. The child then explained that she related her mistake to money and talked about how 4 would be like 40 cents and 04 would be like 4 cents. The teacher congratulated her for being able to see the difference and explain how she figured it out to the rest of the class so that everyone could learn. Thus, mistakes were viewed by students and the teacher as welcomed opportunities for learning. Disruptions were nonexistent.

Overall, there were shifts in the degree of respect teachers demonstrated for their students and an increased awareness of how to monitor and meet individual needs. Teachers noted that by having children critically reflect on what they were doing, they were able to focus on the processes and strategies that kids needed to tackle problems. All interviewed staff members discussed ways in which they were thinking about or trying to implement more child-centered instruction.

In depth interviews with staff revealed that Training/Staff Development in conjunction with the preservice teacher education program benefited elementary students in a variety of ways that could lead to improved student achievement. These comments fell into three major categories: balance, assistance,

and responsibility. An explanation of each category and quotations to support each category are listed below.

Balance. Balance refers to a variety of strategies, learning styles, content, and the focus in the classroom. Thus, process, affect, content, and a view of the larger picture each receive attention in planning and teaching. The category of balance is supported by the following quotes:

"Even though I'm working with 1st and 2nd graders, I'm thinking about when they get to be adults. TAAS is important, but I'm thinking about the whole scope of education."

"I always ask for an intern and resident during TAAS prep time. They can do whole language and I can focus on TAAS. If I was by myself, I would only be able to do TAAS."

"I do what is good for [interns and residents] to see. I make sure I hit a variety--I cover many levels in reading and math."

Assistance. Assistance refers to interns, residents, parents, administrators, university liaisons, and mentor teachers working together as a team to better meet the needs of students. Concepts in this category include: time, student/teacher ratios, increased one-on-one attention, and keeping current professionally. The category of assistance is supported by the following quotes:

"I love when we [teacher, intern, resident] work as a team. We know what needs to be done and we do it."

"I have better relationships with parents now. I don't wait 2 or 3 weeks, I only wait 2 or 3 days if there is a problem. Then I talk to parents the way I would want to be talked to."

"I'm more lenient if it is a single parent working long hours. I stay after school and work with them [students in single parent homes] more."

"During the day an intern or resident pulls a kid from class to work with them--we target kids who are not getting help at home--not necessarily because mom, dad, or a grandparent doesn't want to, but because they don't have time."

"I could never have done this training without my interns and residents. I would have been here till midnight and taken hours of stuff home--but I wouldn't have been as successful with my children because

I would have been so stressed....my interns and residents have stepped in and constantly ask, 'How can I help?'"

"In the fall it was like team teaching--she [the resident] walked around, monitored and helped kids so that the student teacher ratio was smaller. Helps you to have better control. If a student is off task when you are teaching--she [the intern or resident] can help kids get on task while you focus on instruction."

"Liaisons are a key to success....[they] must be organized....not someone who comes in and thinks teachers are stupid. [Liaisons] must be supportive of mentors and be direct."

"[The Academics 2,000 program coordinator] comes and does stuff with kids as follow-up to teacher inservice."

Responsibility. Responsibility refers to maintaining and raising standards for one's self and others in both personal and professional contexts. The category of responsibility is supported by the following quotes:

"I expect all students to be successful. If they are not, I find out why. I'm going to make sure they are successful."

"[Previous] teachers didn't encourage me that they [my students] would be able to become fluent readers, but they have. They've all been very successful. I started with the lowest 20% and they are going back into class at middle to average. I took the kids back to the previous teachers so they could hear them read--they were astonished."

"I now teach strategies and put more responsibility on students to check for meaning and justify their answers."

"I assume if they [referring to interns and residents] don't know it, I teach it."

"I make sure they've mastered the skill. As soon as they get off the bus at 7:30 AM I grab them."

"[Having an intern or resident] keeps me up to date and creative because I know someone is observing me."

"I feel like everything I'm doing--I have to instill this same desire in interns and residents. Get here early and start immediately--not drag in just before the kids."

"[I tell interns and residents that these little kids] may be your doctor, lawyer, or police officer one day. I fire them up and put that heavy load on them. Let them see it is not an August till May job. I want them to be the best teacher in their building."

"I tell them [interns and residents] if they don't like kids or what they are doing, get out!"

"I used to do what I wanted to do, I didn't cover all strategies, etc. Now it's like when you are being evaluated. I use lots of praise, do openings, and closings. I model what they [interns and residents] need to see."

"The university is now keeping check on everybody. Used to be we would see the university person only once, now we see them every week."

Discussion

Last year, it was hard to separate professional development from preservice teacher education in the classroom. There was a synergistic effect that resulted in concurrent growth for faculty and preservice teachers. The project encouraged parallel and collaborative development while permitting both institutions to have voice and choice. Thus, players representing both institutions worked toward mutually identified goals and a collaboratively articulated program. The guiding principle was that shared decision making that involved public school personnel, university faculty, and university students impacted the self-efficacy of individuals within the collaborative to better meet the needs of the students in the public school classroom.

This year, the collaborative has made a conscious and concerted effort to include the community in planning and implementation. Although still in the early stages, it appears that the same synergistic effect that resulted in growth for faculty and preservice teachers is beginning to impact the community. In the longer view, it appears that to obtain a level of comfort with parent and community member involvement in planning and decision making, professional efficacy must first be developed. Thus, by increasing the knowledge base of teachers and administrators, the fear that triggers defensive behavior in professionals appears to decrease. For example, one teacher who never shared with her peers or ventured outside of her own classroom prior to involvement with this program stated, "[It] doesn't bother

me to have people come into my room. I like them to see how hard I'm working. I tell others, come in here and see if you could do this. I'm successful and you could have the same success with your students." This teacher specifically cited Reading Recovery Training as helping her to understand how children learn to read. This empowered her to move away from commercially produced programs that try to meet individual needs with one method and rely on her own judgment. She said, "I used to try to use phonics programs to solve all the problems, but I was frustrated because I always had some children that didn't improve and I couldn't explain why. Now I see that I have to understand and assess all the cueing systems. That way I can figure out where to focus my energy to help children succeed. I can also explain to parents what the child is missing." She now feels that she can appropriately assess the difficulty and implement specific teaching/learning strategies that will help the child become a successful reader. This same teacher, who avoided peer and parent contact in previous years, is now presenting workshops for Region VIII, actively inviting parents to observe, and recruiting parents to work on the new district planning committee.

A key characteristic that appears to impact the classroom is that mentors, interns, residents, liaisons, parents, and administrators work together in teams. Mentors cite, having another adult in the classroom to talk to and reflect with, as well as the opportunity to work with another mentor on educational issues, as one of the main reasons for risk-taking and professional growth. This teaming gives them the opportunity to try activities that take more than one set of adult hands to organize and manage successfully. The extra person who has a background in teaching/learning strategies and child psychology is also cited as a key to providing increased individualized attention and help for at risk students. More than one set of adult eyes and ears and multiple perspectives are also cited as important in ongoing monitoring and assessment of students. The support of other adults in the classroom when a child tries to manipulate a situation or when something happens that can be misinterpreted has been cited as a stress reliever. All interviewees noted that awareness of social/cultural/economic differences helped them to identify their own perspective so that they could be more sensitive to the perspectives of others. Finally, the ongoing sharing of perceptions of students' progress and communication among team members

appears to support reflection on past activities and contemplation of future activities for further refinement. Thus, when there is a greater knowledge base and a focus on the child, the teachers appear to be more sensitive to family situations and can focus on working together as a team with parents to plan a strategy for success instead of pointing a finger to assign blame.

Teaming also appears to be critical for the preservice teachers. The program not only provides preservice teachers with intensive exposure to the "real-world" of the public schools, but creates a "support system" called an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). Each ILT consists of a minimum of: one preservice teacher (intern and/or resident), two public school teachers (mentors), and a university faculty member (liaison). The majority of the decision-making power for what occurs in the classroom rests with the ILT. Thus, this program is designed to accommodate change so that ongoing evaluation and modification of the roles of interns, residents, mentors, and liaisons can shift to meet the needs of the mentors, the preservice teachers, and the public school students.

Since the major focus of all participants becomes the children, ILT meetings appear to evolve to discuss how to meet the needs of the students better in the public school classroom with the liaison serving as a reflective mirror and an advisor of options. When mentors and liaisons consciously and consistently model this behavior, preservice teachers appear to more quickly make the transition from thinking like a student to thinking like teachers. They are able to focus on applying newly learned knowledge from seminars in actual situations where they have to solve problems with students, parents, administrators, mentors, and peers. The key role of the university liaison appears to be the role of supporter, questioner, listener, and provider of resources based on the needs identified by the team, not the leader who tells team members what to do. When the liaison takes the role of a facilitator, a risk free environment appears to be established and all team members are empowered to devise their own plans for problem solving. In this context, preservice teachers appear to become initiators of their own plans for professional growth. School district administrators note that consistently working with university professors provides public school personnel valuable insight into theory that helps them to make stronger connections between theory and practice. Administrators also noted that faculty and staff exposure to new

types of planning and research-based strategy has provided a broader perspective when district personnel planned district goals, objectives, and plans of action.

Conclusion: The Ongoing Process of Collaborative Education

This nationally award winning program was fully implemented in the spring of 1996 and currently has over 400 elementary and secondary interns and residents in the field. The key characteristics for success emerging from this story are: valuing all participants from DAY ONE, consistently giving all participants voice and choice, teaming, administrators that are willing to empower their faculty members, and focusing on public school students and learning. Preservice teachers who have completed the program have been extremely complimentary of the education they have received. They feel well prepared to enter the classroom with the confidence of an experienced teacher. The public schools who help prepare these preservice teachers are eager to employ them because they believe they are extremely well prepared to teach.

The collaborative effort, however, is not simple or easy. Sharing rights and benefits is exciting, but shouldering responsibilities and accountabilities is an ongoing struggle. Rationales for action and expectations based on previous experiences with top down administrative models result in the need for constant redefinition of program goals, participant roles, and power. However, as this evolutionary process proceeds, the impact of the protective phrase, "I've never done it that way before," diminishes because the concept of collaborative reform is not built on the question " What is best for me?" but "What is best for us?" Thus, the emphasis shifts to possibilities for the future rather than constraints from the past. Overall, this collaborative process empowers educators and creates a synergistic effect that leads to an ongoing cycle of growth for all involved. As collaboration continually pushes public schools and universities to pursue "possibilities" rather than to dwell on "what already exists," true educational reform occurs.

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